

MEMORANDUM TO: RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OFFICERS

FROM: SUSAN L. FREY, DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS OFFICER,
SO-312

SUBJECT: RM 2001-15, RESOURCE NEEDS TO SUPPORT
WORKER COMPENSATION CLAIM ACTIVITY

On August 1, 2001, workers with occupational illnesses believed to have been contracted due to employment by or for the Department of Energy (DOE) can begin to file claims under the Energy Employee Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000. The Department's responsibilities will be managed by the Office of Worker Advocacy under the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health.

The records that are needed to support compensation claims are maintained by DOE and must be provided to workers upon request. Potential claimants may include members of the public; employees or surrogates of employees of the Department and its predecessor agencies, and their contractors and subcontractors; and former members of the armed forces.

To facilitate the claims process, outreach offices, in all probability, will be established near DOE sites that have existing Former Worker Programs. These sites may include: Oak Ridge, Hanford, Rocky Flats, Nevada, Savannah River, Paducah, Ohio, and Albuquerque. The outreach offices will be staffed with DOE and Department of Labor personnel who will provide the public with general information on the compensation program, coordinate Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Privacy Act (PA), and other requests that relate to potential claims, and assemble records for worker claim files. It is anticipated that assistance teams will visit those sites that will not have outreach offices available to them.

The Department has already begun to experience a growth in FOIA/PA and Records Management activity due to the compensation program. Workload is expected to increase throughout the year and continue well into FY 2002. The compensation program hotline has already received over 11,000 inquiries. In order to reduce the burden on the Field, the Office of Worker Advocacy has agreed to fund additional resources to support the compensation program. Based on current and anticipated workload, a limited amount of temporary assistance will be provided to each affected site. In order to assist us in assessing the amount of resources that will be required, please work with your FOIA Officer to determine your site's anticipated needs and those of your major contractors. Include a cost estimate based on local contractor services and identify level of security clearance that will be required. Areas of need may include, but are not limited to, xeroxing, scanning, responding to telephone and written requests, records research, and records accession activities. Please provide this information to me by cob April 30, 2001. Your preliminary estimates will be discussed at the Records Management Council meeting scheduled for April 24-25 (via video conference).

To further explain the compensation program and the role of records management, a mission and function statement for the Office of Worker Advocacy and a preliminary listing of records series that will be useful in developing worker claims are attached. Dr. Paul Seligman, Acting Director of the Office of Worker Advocacy, is scheduled to give a presentation on the compensation program on June 7 at the Records Management Conference in San Antonio, Texas (June 4-7, 2001). For the convenience of attendees, he will also conduct a separate question and answer session the afternoon of June 7. FOIA Officers and Records Managers are encouraged to attend.

This request is also being sent to the Chief Information Officers in the Field through the Lead Program Secretarial Officers at Headquarters. Because time is of the essence, we request that action be taken as quickly as possible. Questions regarding this request may be addressed to me on 301-903-3666 or to Sharon Evelin on 301-903-3455.

Attachments